United Nations S/2018/725

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 August 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 19 July 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon the request of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, I have the honour to transmit the communiqué of the 782nd meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council on the joint review of the African Union Mission in Somalia, which was adopted on 27 June 2018 in Nouakchott (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

Letter dated 13 July 2018 from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to transmit the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted at its 782nd meeting, held at the ministerial level on 27 June 2018, in Nouakchott, Mauritania, relating to the outcomes of the joint review of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), undertaken from 10 to 19 May 2018 (see enclosure I). The joint review was undertaken by a joint team of the African Union and the United Nations to assess issues related to the transition of security responsibilities in Somalia from AMISOM to the Federal Government of Somalia and its security institutions.

I would be most grateful if the communiqué, which renewed the AMISOM mandate up to 27 May 2019, and the related report (see enclosure II) could be transmitted to the members of the United Nations Security Council for their information and action, as appropriate.

(*Signed*) Moussa **Faki Mahamat**

Enclosure I

[Original: English and French]

Communiqué of the 782nd meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, held on 27 June 2018

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 782nd meeting held on 27 June 2018 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, adopted the following decision on the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the AU-United Nations (UN) Joint Review of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and renewal of the mandate of AMISOM:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the AU-UN Joint Review of AMISOM, as well as of the briefing made by Ambassador Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security;

2. **Recalls** its previous pronouncements on the situation in Somalia and AMISOM, in particular Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLXIX), adopted at its 769th meeting held on 30 April 2018; and Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLIII), adopted at its 753rd meeting held on 15 February 2018;

3. **Pays tribute** to the AMISOM Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), and in particular to AMISOM personnel who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and those who sustained injuries in the promotion of peace, security, stability and reconciliation in Somalia;

4. **Reiterates its gratitude** to the UN, the EU and other bilateral partners in supporting AMISOM operations against the Al Shabaab terrorist group, as well as their financial and material support to AMISOM and the Federal Government of Somalia;

5. **Further reaffirms its** endorsement of the Somalia Transition Plan (STP), support to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and **appeals** to all Somali stakeholders to fully commit themselves towards the effective implementation of the STP. Council **emphasizes**, once again, that the STP is a realistic and comprehensive document, which forms the basis for channeling collective efforts and undertaking further planning to make progress towards the take-over of primary security responsibilities by the FGS. In this context, Council **stresses** that the implementation of the STP is dependent on addressing the challenges raised by the Operational Readiness Assessment (ORA) of Somali National Security Forces (SNSF), regional forces, completion of discussions on Somali troop generation, training, integration of regional forces to guarantee their contribution, accommodation, equipment and logistical support for the tasks related to the transition;

6. **Commends** the FGS for its continued commitment to the Transition, the recent steps it has taken to improve the administration and management of the SNSF, and **welcomes** the recent agreements reached during the 7th National Security Council meeting on political and security matters;

7. **Commends** the AU Commission for the successful conduct of the AU-UN Joint Review of AMISOM, and **further commends** the FGS, the UN, T/PCCs and bilateral partners for their commitment and cooperation extended to the AU-UN Joint Review Team;

8. **Acknowledges** the considerable progress made to secure peace and stability in Somalia, and stresses that due to the fragility of the political and security situation,

this progress faces the risk of being reversed. Council **notes** that, the slow pace of national reconciliation, pending finalization of the constitution to ensure consensus among Somali stakeholders on the nature of a federal Somalia, comprehensive implementation of the National Security Architecture, continued tensions around the state formation processes, as well as external interference, present risks to progress so far achieved;

9. **Expresses serious concern** over Al-Shabaab's ability to carry out deadly terrorist attacks against innocent civilians, Somali security forces and AMISOM. Council also **recognizes** with serious concern that, beyond the threat posed by Al-Shabaab, there is continuing regional and clan divisions, coupled with the proliferation of arms and the presence of Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) in Puntland and south central Somalia which present sources of continued insecurity in the country;

10. **Welcomes** the findings and observations of the 4th AU-UN Joint Review of AMISOM particularly the political determination of the FGS to assume primary security responsibilities from AMISOM;

11. **Reiterates** AMISOM's significant role in providing support to the political and stabilisation processes in Somalia, and **calls** on the UN, consistent with the 'Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhancing Partnership on Peace and Security' and the Report of the Special Envoys on AMISOM Financing to establish effective cooperation and coordination mechanisms to enhance the political engagement of both organizations in Somalia;

12. **Expresses concern** over the slow progress in addressing the gaps identified during the ORA of Somali National Army (SNA) and **notes** also that, despite the international support rendered to the SNSF, they lack the capacity to take over primary security responsibility in the short to the medium term. In this respect, Council **urges** the FGS to take bold steps to implement its National Security Architecture;

13. **Endorses** the recommendations in the Report of the Chairperson on the Joint Review, and **emphasizes** that the reconfiguration of AMISOM should be consistent with the implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan, including the gradual formation of multinational sectors and sector headquarters to enhance command and control and inter-operability. Council also **underlines** the need to avoid any security vacuum that could undermine the gains made so far in Somalia. Council therefore **stresses** the need to put on hold the October 2018 reduction of 1,000 military personnel until the implementation of the pilot phase expected by December 2018/Feb 2019 in order to enable AMISOM to reconfigure itself to effectively channel its support to the FGS while avoiding the creation of gaps in other key locations;

14. **Calls for** accelerated efforts by the UN, the larger international community and T/PCCs to urgently support the FGS in building the capacity of its National Security Forces and institutions. Council **further calls for** an expanded training and mentoring role for AMISOM Military and Police Components, to rapidly generate the required SNSF personnel to implement the STP and **stresses the need** for greater coordination and coherence amongst key stakeholders to support the building of a capable and inclusive Somalia security sector;

15. **Emphasizes** that AMISOM reconfiguration should include the expansion of its civilian component to specific and key locations across AMISOM's area of operation to carry out their substantive work, provide guidance and support to military operations;

16. **Requests** the Commission to work closely with the UN to undertake, within the next three months, a comprehensive review of AMISOM multidimensional capacities

and capabilities. The review will identify additional capacities needed to support the implementation of the STP and to provide the baseline for an AMISOM reconfiguration, including any troop reductions. In this regard, Council **underscores** that the review will also inform requests for additional capacities, as well as enabling capabilities to support AMISOM's role and will also provide the basis for the supply of utility and attack helicopters required to support AMISOM operations;

17. **Underscores the imperative** of expediting the generation of outstanding force enablers and multipliers, in particular air assets to enhance mobility, resupply, rapid reaction, quick attack combat capability and the implementation of other mandated tasks, as well as the deployment of outstanding Mission Enabling Units and counter-IED capabilities needed to enhance AMISOM's support and protection in clearing priority Main Supply Routes;

18. **Welcomes** the progress made on the implementation of the recommendations annexed to the 2017 Report of the AU-UN Joint Review on the enhancement of AMISOM's compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights. Council **notes** that the anticipated joint operations during the transition with or using regional forces that are not trained in IHL and human rights, may increase the risk of violations of human rights and IHL by these forces. Council **calls for** the enhancement of AMISOM's IHL and human rights capacity to support the strengthening of measures for the Somali security forces to guarantee compliance and accountability of SNSF, whilst also continuing to ensure progress on AMISOM's compliance and accountability;

19. **Stresses the need** for the enhancement of the United Nations Support Office to Somalia (UNSOS) in line with AMISOM's reconfiguration and mandated tasks. Council also **requests** the review of the AMISOM support concept to address existing gaps and to enhance AMISOM's role in supporting the implementation of the STP. In this regard, Council requests UNSOS to provide a support package for the SNSF, which is inclusive of the Somali Police Force and regional forces contributing to STP implementation;

20. **Emphasizes** that the continued presence of AMISOM in Somalia and the implementation of a viable STP, necessitates the securing of predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM and the Somali security institutions. Council **looks forward** to the outcomes and next steps following the UNSC's consideration of the Report of the AU and UN Special Envoys on AMISOM Financing;

21. **Decides** to mandate AMISOM, in addition to the four tasks highlighted in the 700th Communiqué of the PSC, to undertake the mentioned tasks as outlined in Phase 1 of the STP, expand its political and stabilization role into all sectors, including ensuring IHL and human rights compliance and accountability, progressive training and mentoring of Somali National Army, Somali Police Force and Darwish forces required to successfully implement the STP, and **calls on** the Troop/Police Contributing Countries and UNSOS to provide resources as appropriate;

22. **Further decides** to renew the mandate of AMISOM up to 27 May 2019, and **calls** for the development of a new AMISOM Concept of Operations (CONOPs) aligned to support the implementation of the STP and concurrent activities. In this context, council **Calls** for a technical assessment of the implementation of the STP to be carried out within six months, in addition to a Joint Review prior to the expiry of the mandate, to assess progress achieved on the implementation of the STP, the state and effectiveness of AMISOM reconfiguration and its support to the transition process and any further reconfiguration and alignment as appropriate;

23. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to transmit this Communiqué to the African Members of the UN Security Council (A3), as well as to the Secretary

General of the United Nations, to be circulated as a working document to the members of the Security Council and other actions as appropriate;

24. **Decides** to remain seized of the matter.

Enclosure II

Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations joint review of the African Union Mission in Somalia

I. Introduction

1. On 30 August 2017, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued Resolution 2372 (2017) requesting the Secretary-General to *conduct a comprehensive assessment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by 15 April 2018, working closely with the African Union and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), to take stock of the transition thus far including the development of Somali security institutions, and to make recommendations on the progressive transition from AMISOM to Somali security responsibility including over the electoral period, taking into account the capacities of the Somali security forces*. The assessment of the Somali security forces, Somali security institutions and AMISOM would ascertain the Somali security forces readiness to implement the transition and propose how AMISOM would need to be properly configured to support the implementation, especially of the first phase of the Somalia Transition Plan, adopted by the 769th meeting of the PSC on 30 April 2018.

2. On 30th April 2018, in its Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLIII)], Council emphasizes that the Somalia Transition Plan is a realistic and comprehensive document which forms the basis for channelling collective efforts and undertake further planning so as to consolidate AMISOM's gains and make progress towards the take-over of primary security responsibilities by the FGS. Council stressed that the full implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan is dependent on fully addressing the challenges raised by the Operational Readiness Assessment of SNA, regional forces, completion of discussions on the Somali troop generation, training, integration, accommodation, equipment and logistical support for the tasks related to the transition.

3. The Joint Review made its findings, observations and recommendations. This report considers the key findings, observations and recommendations of AU-UN Joint Review (AU-UN JR) of AMISOM which was conducted in Mogadishu, Somalia and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 10 to 19 May 2018 and provides the Commissions observations and recommendations for the consideration of the Council on the way forward in terms of AMISOM's support to Somalia.

II. Objectives of the African Union-United Nations joint review

4. This fourth AU-UN Joint Review of AMISOM, was aimed to undertake a comprehensive assessment of AMISOM and recommend options for effective and progressive transition of security from AMISOM to Somalia National security forces and institutions (SNSF/I) in line with the Somali transition plan (2018–2021), in an orderly and responsible manner in order not to reverse the gains so far achieved. In this regard, the AU-UN JR: (i) assessed implementation of UNSCR 2372 mandated tasks by AMISOM in support of FGS and SNSF/I; (ii) discussed the modalities for the implementation of phase one of the STP with FGS lead, contribution of regional forces and support required support of AMISOM; and (iii) options for AMISOM reconfiguration and support, including funding for the SNSF/I, tied to the implementation of the transition plan.

III. Methodology

5. The team held consultations with FGS National Security Advisor, chiefs of the SNA and Somali Police Force (SPF) plus their senior officials. The review team met with the President of Somalia, H.E. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo on 17 May. The team was unable to have direct consultations with the Federal Member States (FMS) of Somalia, due to the then on-going political developments, including a meeting of the FMS at the 2nd Council of Interstate Cooperation (CIC), which was taking place concurrently with the visit of the joint review team. In Addis Ababa, the JR team debriefed representatives of AMISOM T/PCCs present in Addis Ababa and key partners, on the main outcomes of the Joint Review.

IV. Key findings

i. Overall political context and associated risks

6. The AMISOM operational environment continues to be unique and cuts across the spectrum of peace enforcement, war fighting, asymmetrical warfare, counter terrorism and stabilization. Further, unlike contemporary peace support operations, the AMISOM forces, the international partners and supporting agencies are considered targets of Al Shabaab. Somalia situation therefore requires specific interventions and flexibility by AMISOM in exercising its mandate including the logistics support systems provided by UNSOS. Whilst Somalia has made considerable progress over the last ten years, with AMISOM creating the enabling environment for political processes, the progress achieved is still reversible, due to the fragility of the political situation. In particular, the slow pace of national reconciliation and a final constitution to ensure consensus among Somali stakeholders on the nature of a federal Somalia suggests the possibility of continued political instability. This situation is further compounded by Al-Shabaab's continued ability to undertake deadly terrorist attacks against innocent civilians, Somali security forces and AMISOM. Beyond Al-Shabaab's threat, continuing regional and clan divisions, coupled with the proliferation of arms and presence of Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) extremists in Puntland and South Central Somalia is also a major concern.

7. Ongoing tensions between Somaliland and Puntland as well as continued challenges in the interim administration of Galmudug also continue to exacerbate internal dynamics and negatively impacting fragile FGS-FMS relations. The current standoff between the Gulf countries is also unfolding a proxy contestation in Somalia and negatively impacting fragile FGS-FMS relations as well as sowing seeds of further divisions among Somalis.

8. The joint review observed that Somalia is making progress towards debt relief and implementing fiscal reforms that would enable it to regain access to international financing, and efforts by the FGS to improve revenue generation and collection are yielding results. This offers the possibility for Somalia to facilitate the transition and financially sustain its security sector. Thus, AMISOM remains indispensable to providing security and creating the necessary space for the political process to unfold, until the time Somali security institutions are able to garner the required financial and force capabilities to shoulder this responsibility. However, limited alignment between the administration and leadership of key security sector institutions was noted. Additionally, it was noted that implementation of the transition will also require realistic costs assessments of each of the detailed plans' tasks, and a framework for financing.

ii. AMISOM's support to the implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan (STP)

9. **Proposed reconfiguration of AMISOM military and police components in support of the Transition Plan**: In line with resolution 2372 (2017), AMISOM completed a reduction of 1,000 military personnel by 31 December 2017 and is expected to undertake further reduction of another 1,000 military personnel by October 2018. The joint review however recommended that this reduction be postponed until the implementation of the pilot phase expected to be implemented by December 2018/Feb 2019 in order to enable AMISOM reconfigure itself to commence its support to the FGS and prevent the creation of gaps in other important locations. AMISOM Police will reconfigure within the current authorized strength of 1040 to support the first phase of the transition plan, and extend its activities to other population centres beyond Mogadishu and the FMS capitals.

10. **Implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan**: AMISOM is ready to support the STP starting with the priority tasks of Phase One, as spelt out in the STP. This includes handing over Mogadishu Stadium, supporting SNSF take over and consolidate itself in Leego, and secure the Mogadishu-Baidoa Main Supply route. However, it was noted that effective implementation of the STP is dependent on the contribution of regional forces, noting their higher level of readiness than SNA to conduct joint operations. Thus, their integration, into SNA with the fulfillment of necessary required conditions is critical, as this will qualify them to access the UN logistics Support Package to conduct joint operations alongside AMISOM, and ensure holding and securing of recovered areas. In this regard, the ORA of the regional forces should be completed as soon as possible to validate the various regional forces and special police unit (Darwish) in accordance with the STP.

11. **Enabling AMISOM to accomplish new tasks**: The need for AMISOM military and police to provide training and mentoring to the SNA and SPF respectively, including regional forces was evident. The training would includes ensuring interoperability of SNA personnel for joint operations with AMISOM as well as SPF personnel engaged in providing security to various population centres. Additionally, AMISOM Police activities should be planned within a broader framework to complement the SPF and support Somali judiciary and corrections institutions. This should be coordinated within existing mechanisms including UNSOM, UNSOS, EU and other partners for optimum delivery. Thus, and with a view to rapidly generate the required personnel for implementation of the STP, there is need to clarify and strengthen the language of a future PSC Communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution on the expanded training and mentoring role of AMISOM to enhance the capacity of the SNSF to lead the implementation of the STP.

12. **Expansion of AMISOM Civilian Component**: It was noted that AMISOM military personnel in some instances are confronted with issues that go beyond their role and capacity. These include initiating and facilitating inter clan and community dialogue as well as facilitating stabilisation activities, including Quick Impact Projects (QUIPs) which are expected to be carried out by civilian personnel. In this regard, and as implementation of the STP commences, deployment of civilian personnel in specific and key locations across AMISOM's area of operation will guide and support military operations. Such deployment will enable AMISOM to provide support to inclusive political processes, training and monitoring of IHL, human rights and conduct and discipline compliance and accountability (including investigations of allegations) of AMISOM personnel and ensure the same for SNSF personnel conducting joint operations with AMISOM as well as enhancing and continuing to support stabilization and other related activities as provided for in the Somalia Transition Plan. In this regard, recruitment and deployment of additional civilian

personnel is recommended to enable AMISOM facilitate these critical tasks and augment its contribution to supporting the State building process including those linked to enhancing FGS-FMS relationship to guarantee an effective federal system in Somalia. This is in line with the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS) that will lead to the transfer of primary security responsibility from AMISOM to Somali Security Forces and Institutions.

iii. Review of AMISOM support concept

13. It was noted that support implications for the transition remain difficult to accurately determine since the capacity of the SNSF to deploy and takeover security responsibilities from AMISOM in particular locations have not been confirmed. Thus, and alongside the reconfiguration of AMISOM, there is a need for a new comprehensive operational logistic support concept to address ongoing efforts to solving existing gaps and to support implementation of the STP. In this regard, a joint support plan (SNSF/AMISOM/UNSOS/Partners) should be considered as part of the development of a new AMISOM CONOPs to facilitate execution of Phase One of the Somali Transition Plan. Additionally, the current support package for the SNSF should be reviewed and extended to facilitate implementation of the transition plan as well as ensure inclusion of the SPF and regional forces contributing to the STP implementation thereof. UNSOS, UNMAS and other relevant entities should also be provided with the required mandate to also adequately support activities of AMISOM Police and eligible Somali Police Forces.

iv. Generation of force enablers and multipliers

14. UNSCR 2036 (Feb 2012) authorized the deployment of 12 (twelve) military Helicopters, including three attack and nine utility. The generation of these force enablers and multipliers, to enhance mobility, resupply, rapid reaction and quick attack combat capability in support of the STP and implementation of other mandated tasks needs to be urgently expedited. Moreover, maximizing existing Mission Enabling Units (MEU), which support the movements of AMISOM logistics is critical for the implementation of the STP (in particular the clearance of key MSRs) including deployment of additional equipment in terms of force protection, engineering and logistics which needs to be expedited to enhance AMISOM operations. In view of the foregoing, 03 military utility helicopters are urgently required to support AMISOM operations. Additional Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) capability is also required to protect our personnel and enhance securing the MSRs.

V. Observations

15. While the Transition Plan provides the strategic direction for the process by which a gradual handover of security responsibility from AMISOM to Somali security institutions can take place, detailed planning and implementation is required to put all phases of the plan in motion. Additionally, effective implementation of the STP is dependent on fully addressing the challenges raised by the Operational Readiness Assessment (ORA) of the SNA and SPF, involvement and contribution of the FMS and regional forces, agreement on Somali troop generation, training and logistical support and resources for the tasks related to the transition as well as coordination and support of international partners. Additionally, a holistic approach is required, including much enhanced coordinated efforts on extending state authority, policing, establishing local administrations with rule of law, courts and mechanisms to ensure respect for human rights and the provision of basic services to the population.

16. The Commission wishes to note that in addressing the objectives for the assessment, four issues were clearly identified; the status of Somali Security Forces and their readiness to undertake the transition; the role of AMISOM in the political process in the transition; the capabilities required by AMISOM to enable it better support the transition and the requirement to undertake an orderly and responsible transition to avoid reversal of the gains.

i. The status of Somali Security Forces (SNSF) and their readiness to undertake the Transition

17. It may be recalled that during the AMISOM Police and Troop Contributing countries Summit held in Djibouti in Feb 2016, the African Union expressed its position, which was endorsed and supported by the TCCs, that as part of AMISOM exit strategy, AMISOM would initiate its withdrawal from Somalia by Oct 2018. Coincidentally, it may also be recalled that a perception was created in 2017, which indicated that the SNSF had developed the critical mass within its security Forces and institution, to enable SNSF start taking over security responsibilities from AMISOM. These events contributed to UNSCR 2372, initialling the recent transition plan. However, following an assessment of SNA undertaken in October-November 2017, the inability of Somali National Security Forces, in their current form, to undertake any military moderate operations on their own, due to weak organisation, management, equipment deficiencies, including their inability to hold any Forward Operating Base (FOB) became evident. The review noted that no significant progress has been made to address the gaps that were identified during Operation Readiness Assessment (ORA) of SNA. Therefore capability challenges still exists in SNA, hence the inability to takeover security responsibilities in the immediate term. In the week ending 06 June 2018, the FGS National Security Council decided that a number of SNSF required for the Phase 1 would be mobilized from South Western State, and that a number of the equipment for the military still needed to be acquired. Despite the significant international support rendered to the SNSF, they lack the capacity, structures, institutional oversight and support to be able to take over security responsibility in the short to medium term.

ii. The role of AMISOM in the political process in the Transition

18. As part of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, enshrined in the "Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhancing Partnership on Peace and Security", signed by the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the UN Secretary-General in April 2017, the United Nations is obliged to support its partner in making progress towards its aspiration to establish the required capacity to plan, deploy and manage multi-dimensional peace operations. This is also in the strategic interest of the United Nations, with a view to the principle that Africans are first and foremost responsible for maintaining peace and security in Africa. AMISOM serves as a pilot in this regard, and is already looked at as a case study for future operations. Denying AMISOM the recognition for its political role impedes AU on this path. The need for political support in Somalia is vast, and there is sufficient political space for UNSOM and AMISOM (with their limited personnel). It will be important to define roles and responsibilities and geographical coverage, and to establish effective cooperation and coordination mechanisms to avoid duplication, or incoherence in the political engagement of both organizations.

19. The Commission strongly re-iterates that AMISOM has a role to play, in support of the political and stabilisation processes in close cooperation with UNSOM and relevant member states, including those based in Mogadishu. To optimally contribute to these processes, it is recommended that AMISOM undertakes a mapping of the current deployment of its civilian personnel; identification of gaps of presence in key

areas complementing that of UNSOM and preparation of a summary of these results to be considered moving forward. Additionally, it is recommended that Member States consider supporting the Commission and AMISOM in generating resources for the recruitment of additional required civilian personnel to ensure that AMISOM enhances its multidimensional character. This will enable the mission to contribute to early recovery activities, including self- sustaining community-owned and resilient processes as well as broader stabilization activities, which includes medium to long-term governance and institution building processes.

iii. The requirement to undertake an orderly and responsible transition in order to avoid reversal of the gains achieved

20. AMISOM role to contribute to security and stability in Somalia is critical to continue creating the space for political and other activities of the FGS. However it lacks inherent capabilities and needs to utilize its current capabilities as optimally as possible. Additionally, the current mandated task of joint operations against Al-Shaabab is not sufficiently supported with the required multipliers and enablers, such as additional attack and support helicopters, mission enabling units, a quick react force (QRF) for AMISOM FHQs, and adequate intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets. Moreover, the possible reduction and collapse of some of the FOBs needs to be matched with additional ISR and air assets to allow for greater mobility insertion, extraction and firepower to counter Al Shabaab.

21. The Commission agrees with the joint review observation that there is need to undertake an orderly and responsible transition. It noted that in the process, AMISOM would have to re-organise and reconfigure itself. During the re-organisation, some locations outside Mogadishu deemed to be very sensitive (from a political and security point of view) may not to be vacated by AMISOM. Secondly, after fully realising the current inadequacies of SNSF, AMISOM cannot draw down concurrently from the areas outside Mogadishu, an act that would undermine the political success for FGS and security success for SNSF. It may be recalled that AMISOM will still be undertaking security operations in other areas of responsibility. Further reduction of AMISOM troops and personnel during this delicate period of transition, will have negative consequences on the security situation in Somalia and may lead to a reversal of the gains achieved over the years, particularly if the capacity and capabilities of the SNSF and integration of regional forces is not expedited. In this regard, the Commission agrees with the joint review that the 1000 troop reduction due in October, be postponement and undertaken in February 2019 following an assessment of the progress of the implementation of the STP. The assessment would give a clearer picture on how the implementation of pilot phase 1 of the Transition Plan is proceeding. It is further recommended that further reduction of AMISOM troops be dependent on a comprehensive review of AMISOM capabilities and resources across its areas of operation to confirm existing capabilities, key challenges and threats to better inform a reconfiguration of AMISOM.

22. The Commission agrees that there is a need to ensure interoperability of SNA personnel for joint operations with AMISOM as well as for AMISOM police to expand its training and mentoring activities with a view to extending Somali police presence to other population centres, notably locations on the Mogadishu-Baidoa MSR such as Leego, Buur Hakaba and Wanlaweyn. Thus, it is recommended that the language of a future PSC Communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution includes an expanded mentoring and training role of AMISOM to enhance and augment the capacity of the SNSF to lead the implementation of the STP as part of efforts for the transfer of primary security responsibility from AMISOM to the SNSF.

23. The joint review confirmed that a good level of progress was achieved in implementing the recommendations of the matrix annexed to the 2017 report of the

AU-UN Joint Review on the enhancement of AMISOM civilian component to improve AMISOM compliance with IHL and human rights. The recommendations were aimed at strengthening mechanisms and measures to prevent and address human rights and international humanitarian law violations by AMISOM. With the anticipated operations during the transition and the joint operations with or the use of Regional Forces, violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are likely to increase. In this regard, AMISOM compliance measures and capacity need to be stepped up alongside the measures for the Somali Security forces, particularly those linked to Identification (including numbers, locations, minimum vetting), Command and Control and internal oversight, measures to avoid the use of children, measures to prevent the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse and timely response to allegations, including investigations.

24. In light of developments since the previous joint review, Communiqué of the 700th meeting of the PSC held on 12 July 2017 and resolution 2372 (2017), notably the creation and endorsement of the Transition Plan and the proposition for a strategic direction for AMISOM transformation in its support, the Commission agrees with the joint review recommendation, with the aim of promoting effective AMISOM reconfiguration in support of the Transition Plan, that AMISOM mandate be renewed for one year, with a technical assessment in six months' time, followed by the usual joint review prior to the expiry of the mandate. The technical assessment would review the state and effectiveness of AMISOM reconfiguration in support of the transition and progress on operations being carried out under the Transition Plan, and provide observations on AMISOM trajectory and any reductions. The projected drawdown of 1,000 military personnel by 30 October 2018 be put on hold until after the technical assessment which would provide the modalities for the reduction, in Feb 2019. The technical assessment would also enable assessing the pace of the implementation of the Transition Plan and provide an updated understanding of the state and readiness of Somali security forces.

VI. Recommendations

25. In considerations of the recommendations of the joint review, and positions and strategy of the AU in Somalia, the wish to have an orderly transition of security in Somalia, the Commission wishes to make the following recommendations for consideration of the Council:

a. That Somalia faces a complex combination of new and old threats to its stability and progress. Alongside the threat of Al-Shabaab, its affiliates and other non-state armed groups, political contestation between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States, exacerbated by external influence and interference and the impact mainly of the Gulf crisis, presents itself as major obstacle to the formation of a federal Somalia. The joint review participants were until recently optimistic about reaching compromises in resolving local, clan-based conflicts and relations between the federal government and federated states over time. The ongoing intensive interventions by protagonists of the Gulf crisis, using the soft power of their substantial financial resources can make a considerable impact in a country such as Somalia suffering from 28 years of political instability, high poverty level, and absence of organised security institutions. A high-level intervention may be needed in the near future, aimed at protecting Somalia from the impact of external rivalries and the unfolding proxy contest that have nothing to do with the country and preserving the gains achieved so far. Several options or sequencing could be considered including for the African Union to endorse a special committee to pursue a resolution or a joint Chairperson and Secretary-General initiative.

b. That the development of the Transition Plan is a welcome step and a sign of the commitment of the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States towards assuming responsibility for security. And strongly recommends that political differences, with or without external interference, should not be allowed to prevent implementation of the Transition Plan. The lives and future of twelve million Somalis are at stake. As Somalis continue on the path towards resolving the key federalism questions to be enshrined in the Constitution, including power- and resource-sharing, the FGS and FMS line ministries and security institutions must continue to work closely together on implementation of the National Security Architecture and the Transition Plan, including the accelerated integration of regional forces into national and state security institutions. All key partners including T/PCCs should contribute in building the SNSF/I capacity to successfully implement the STP. All efforts should be made to ensure Somali ownership and unity of purpose at the federal and state levels, as well as wider buy-in across the Somali society, towards the successful implementation of the Plan. The joint review considers failure of successful implementation of the first priorities will be devastating to the credibility of the Plan among other likely negative impressions.

c. That the implementation of the Transition Plan is not possible without the participation, coordination and support of the Somali leadership and security institutions, AMISOM and its T/PCCs as well as key security partners in the detailed planning and operationalization of the Plan through existing mechanisms including CAS and the Transition Implementation Team. Implementation of Phase One and its pilot priorities will be a test case for the AMISOM-Somali security institutions nexus. A test that must score success.

d. That progress on other tasks and priorities of Phase One of the Transition Plan should continue in parallel with securing and handover of the three pilot locations. This includes plans of reconfiguration of AMISOM, clear delineation between locations that should not be affected by any consecutive drawdowns and further detailing of the conditions that would be created at the end of Phase One, including appropriate modalities. Implementation must be carried out in a flexible manner, adjusted to specific locations and situations, and with the participation and practicable agreement of major stakeholders. Future priorities should be consulted with AMISOM and Somali security institutions before adoption. The close involvement of UNSOS in all stages of planning is an absolute necessity.

e. That transferring security responsibility from AMISOM to Somali security institutions under a holistic approach will require a much enhanced coordinated efforts on extending state authority, policing, establishing local administrations with rule of law, courts and mechanisms to ensure respect for human rights and the provision of basic services to the population. Coordination structures under the CAS dealing with such matters should prevail, even at the expense of reduced activity in other stands of the CAS. AMISOM, UN and other partners should be guided by existing Somali federal and state frameworks on stabilization and reconciliation.

f. That while the strategic objectives and priority tasks for AMISOM remain as provided in resolution UNSCR 2372 (2017), they should now be incorporated into the implementation phases of the Transition Plan. AMISOM reconfiguration should commence in earnest consistent with the implementation of the Plan including the gradual formation of multinational sectors to enhance command and control and inter-operability. This includes improving the capabilities of the Force Headquarters, cohesion and coordination among AMISOM TCCs, as well as between AMISOM, Somalis and bilateral partners. The reconfiguration of AMISOM should aim at multiple TCCs in various new sectors, to be further examined in the CONOPS including the requisite enabling units totaling 1,845 uniformed personnel, as outlined in the letter of the Secretary-General S/2013/606 (2013).

g. That a coordination platform such as "fusion cell" or Joint Intelligence cell at Mission Headquarters should be established, as a centre for intelligence sharing from different multi agencies including external experts (whose forces are operating in AMISOM area of operation US, UK and EU) in intelligence and analysis. The cell will integrate various functions (Intelligence, ISR, C-IED and Political intelligence and other SNA intelligence agencies) and have a common strategic and operational picture and analysis of intelligence for the consumption of MHQ and FHQ. This platform would complement the MHQs, but more so the FHQS, and empowering the Force Commander in planning and executing operations.

h. That the AMISOM military mandate should include mentoring SNA for joint operations and training in-theatre to generate a critical mass of SNA/Regional Forces to defend local populations centres. The Commission strongly recommends an approach through which SNA troops identified to take part in specific operations jointly with AMISOM should be gathered and be mentored in combat readiness by AMISOM Military Component before the operations. Joint exercises with AMISOM Military Component are also recommended to take place in secure areas before commencing Military operations. AMISOM's role in police training should continue to be recognized in the mandate by the Council, following the positive results of the pilot project undertaken in Kismayo and Baidoa, under the Joint Police Programme and in line with the New Policing Model and FMS police plans already approved by the Somali National Security Council.

i. That a comprehensive joint AU-UN review of capacities and readiness or ORA of AMISOM should be concluded as soon as possible, within three months, to identify additional capacities and needs to support the implementation of the Transition Plan and provide the baseline for an AMISOM reconfiguration that would result in any troop reductions. The assessment will also inform additional requests for enabling capacities to support AMISOM's role, to justify the provision of key enablers and multipliers to support the quick reaction force (QRF) concept under the command of the Force Commander should be actively pursued. AMISOM will institute the mechanisms of the operationalizing the QRF.

j. That UNSOS support should be enhanced in line with demands emerging during the AMISOM reconfiguration. A system of logistical support to Somali forces that take over security responsibilities from AMISOM is required to facilitate the sustainment of handovers. The UNSOS comprehensive review could explore support modalities for SNSF involved in transition tasks, including an assessment of its comparative advantage and the existing UNSOS supply network, as well as requisite mandate and resources, including voluntary contributions channelled through the SNA Trust Fund. As previously noted, assurances on issues related to accountability in the use of resources and compliance underpin any enhanced UN support and such support either to AMISOM by virtue of its reconfiguration or to Somali force can only be undertaken in strict compliance with HRDDP.

k. That AMISOM should play its role in the political process, in close cooperation with UNSOM and relevant member states based in Mogadishu, and consistent with the AU-UN Framework of Cooperation. It further recognizes that AMISOM's potential to optimally contribute to the political process requires the undertaking of organizational and other preparatory steps to ensure a significant added value to the process. These steps include mapping of the current deployment of AMISOM civilians; identification of gaps of presence in key areas complementing that of UNSOM and preparation of a summary of these results to be considered moving forward.

l. That AMISOM Sector 6 should be closed and subsumed into Sector 2. Sector 6 (in Kismayo city) was created to address a particular situation that existed

in Kismayo Seaport. In was also decided the sector would become multinational with the inclusion of a Kenyan contingent. With the gradual degrading of Al-Shabaab in Kismayo and over time, Jubaland security forces have increased their capacity, resulting in AMISOM handing over security responsibilities of the airport and seaport. With the diminishing of the "particular situation" in Kismayo, the activities of AMISOM Sector 6 forces consisting of approximately 1,600 troops from Ethiopia, Burundi and Kenya contingents have since diminished, while Jubaland security forces' capacity has increased. The decommissioning of Sector 6 will provide flexibility for better utilisation of that force, and enhance the reconfiguration of AMISOM military in regards to operations, logistical support and infrastructure for optimal use elsewhere in the mission.

m. And finally that in light of developments since the previous joint review and resolution 2372 (2017), notably the creation and endorsement of the Transition Plan and the proposition for a strategic direction for AMISOM transformation in its support, the commission recommends, with the aim of promoting effective AMISOM reconfiguration in support of the Transition Plan, that AMISOM mandate is renewed for one year, followed by the development of a new Concept of Operations (CONOPs) aligned to support the implementation of the STP and concurrent activities, with a technical assessment in six months' time, and the usual joint review prior to the expiry of the mandate. The technical assessment would review the state and effectiveness of AMISOM reconfiguration in support of the transition and progress on operations being carried out under the Transition Plan, and provide observations on AMISOM trajectory and reductions. The projected drawdown of 1,000 military personnel by 30 October 2018 would be on hold until after the technical assessment by Feb 2019, which would provide the modalities for the reduction. The technical assessment would also enable assessing the pace of the implementation of the Transition Plan and provide an updated understanding of the state and readiness of Somali security forces.

VII. Conclusion

26. The Commission notes the direction and objective of the Somalia Transition Plan 2018–2020, which is underpinned by the framework on the comprehensive approach to security. In this regard, the emphasis is now on accelerating enhancement of Somalia national security forces and institutions, consolidation of the successes and the extension of state authority to recovered areas. Thus, AMISOM's support to the FGS should be underpinned by political primacy and should primarily be focused on the implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan, ensuring momentum on the Roadmap on inclusive politics, ratification of the Constitution that should clarify roles and responsibilities between the FGS and FMS and integration of regional forces into the SNSF, in line with Somali National Security Architecture. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that AMISOM enjoys greater access to recovered areas than any other actor, including the UN, which gives AMISOM comparative advantage in security stabilization, initiating and supporting confidence building and reconciliation initiatives, civilian stabilization and other efforts aimed at extending state authority in Somalia. Thus, the African Union should capitalize on this and assert its role, in co-ordination with key stakeholders, and contribution to assist Somalia move from conflict to sustainable peace.

United Nations S/2018/726

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 July 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 20 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to my letter dated 27 June 2018, I have the honour to write to you once again to update you on the recent developments and initiatives taken by the Government of Myanmar in relation to the three main areas identified by the Security Council in our effort to continue constructive and collaborative dialogue to find a durable solution to the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State.

Implementation of the memorandum of understanding

Subsequent to the signing, on 6 June 2018, of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Myanmar and two United Nations agencies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the first technical working group meeting to implement the memorandum of understanding was held on 11 July 2018. At the meeting, both sides exchanged views on the proposed workplan initiated by UNDP and UNHCR as well as the visit of the technical working group to the region in order to launch the assessment at 31 village tracts under Butheetaung, Maungtaw and Rathetaung Townships in Northern Rakhine State.

The second meeting of the technical working group was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 18 July 2018 and deliberated on the initial visit of the technical working group to Butheetaung and Maungtaw Township from 21 to 23 July 2018. In line with the proposed workplan, both sides will effectively implement the memorandum of understanding based on the three-month and six-month period programmes. The workplan includes initiatives to promote sustained socioeconomic development, health and education and to create a conducive environment to further enhance harmony and coexistence among the communities in Northern Rakhine State.

From 2 to 4 July, a joint UNHCR and UNDP delegation, led by the visiting UNHCR Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and accompanied by the UNDP Country Director for Myanmar, travelled to Rakhine State to have initial consultations with different communities regarding their situation and to discuss ways in which the Government could improve their situation and resolve their underlying problems, including in terms of livelihoods, access to services, safety and security and how the agencies could support those efforts. It was the first visit to the area by United Nations agencies since the conclusion of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR.

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Addressing accountability

Following the announcement of the Government on 31 May 2018 to establish an Independent Commission of Enquiry as part of its national initiative to address reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine, the Government has now completed the selection process for the composition of the Commission.

I am pleased to inform you that the Government of Myanmar will announce the establishment of the Independent Commission of Enquiry shortly.

Recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State

The Advisory Board of the Committee for the Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State, headed by the Chair, Surakiart Sathirathai, met with senior Officials of the Government in Nay Pyi Taw on 17 July 2018. The workplan of the Advisory Board and implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State were discussed.

The Government continues to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission in earnest. At the same time, it attaches great importance to the advice and opinion of the Advisory Board in the course of implementing the Commission's recommendations.

Progress of the repatriation process

According to a recent government report, as of 11 July 2018, a total of 3,043 names have been verified, finding 2,537 as Myanmar residents, 34 as terrorists and 472 as having no records, from the list of 8,032 persons presented by Bangladesh in January 2018.

In order to increase international cooperation on the repatriation process, the Government received UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director for the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific, Haoliang Xu, in Nay Pyi Taw, on 12 July 2018 to discuss the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR. On the same day, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), William Lacy Swing, met with officials and discussed matters relating to assistance provided by IOM to Myanmar and the progress of the peace and reconciliation process in the country.

On 13 July 2018, Sun Guoxiang, the Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China met with officials in Nay Pyi Taw and had consultations on the peace and reconciliation process in Myanmar and China's continued provision of constructive assistance for Rakhine State.

On 16 July 2018, Hiroto Izumi, the Special Advisor of the Prime Minister of Japan was in Nay Pyi Taw and discussed with the authorities issues related to the peace and reconciliation process and the implementation of development projects in Rakhine State.

The Government also received Victoria Kwakwa, Vice President of the East Asia and Pacific Region of the World Bank Group in Nay Pyi Taw on 10 July 2018. The World Bank pledged support for peace, social inclusion and economic transition in Myanmar. Matters concerning progress in the repatriation and resettlement of the displaced persons from Rakhine State, creating economic opportunities for all communities, including those who are in conflict-affected areas in Rakhine State, the development of projects focusing on microenterprise and small enterprise development, and access to essential social services, were also discussed during her visit.

Regarding bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh, the Minister for the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, U Kyaw Tint Swe met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, and discussed the issue of repatriation during the visit to China at the invitation of the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi. In this regard, Myanmar wishes to express its appreciation to China in reaching the four-point principled common understanding during the meeting.

Following the visit to China, Myanmar has invited Foreign Minister Ali to visit Myanmar from 8 to 11 August to hold further discussions on expediting the repatriation process.

Cooperation with the Special Envoy

The Government of Myanmar has facilitated the visits of Christine Burgener, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar. The first visit was from 12 to 21 June 2018 and the second visit was from 10 to 13 July 2018 to take part in the Union Peace Conference. Myanmar has already agreed to the proposed opening of her office in Nay Pyi Taw. Myanmar is committed to maintaining a constructive and fruitful relationship with the Special Envoy in its efforts to deepen the partnership with the United Nations in addressing the complex challenges confronting the country, particularly in Rakhine State.

I would highly appreciate it if the present letter could be circulated among the members of the Security Council as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Hau Do **Suan**
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/727

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 July 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 18 July 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

The present letter is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2409 (2018), in which it was requested that contingency planning be undertaken for the consideration of a temporary reinforcement of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and that all options be examined, including inter-mission cooperation, for the sole purpose of implementing the mandate of the Mission. Outlined herein is a scenario envisaging a potential deterioration of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and corresponding options for the temporary reinforcement of MONUSCO, to allow the Mission to continue to implement the core priorities under its current mandate.

Planning scenario

One broad scenario, with several variations, was considered when developing and testing the feasibility of options to temporarily reinforce MONUSCO, within the existing mandated framework and assumptions and whereby the comprehensive and inclusive political agreement of 31 December 2016 would remain the relevant framework for the political process. The scenario was premised on the idea that the electoral process would be significantly challenged at some point around key deadlines in the electoral calendar, in particular during the run-up to the elections or when the electoral results are announced. Such challenges could include, but may not necessarily be limited to, an announced delay in the elections, a boycott by major stakeholders, key opposition figures with significant support bases being prevented from registering as presidential candidates or key opposition leaders located abroad being prevented from returning to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Any of those situations could lead to a sudden deterioration of the overall security situation. Such a setback could potentially trigger a further increase in violence and repression, including in areas of the country that have not yet been affected by civil unrest and where there is little or no MONUSCO presence, such as in Equateur, Nord-Ubangi and Sud-Ubangi Provinces, which could further affect the already difficult humanitarian situation.

Should such unrest increase significantly, MONUSCO would face challenges in implementing its current mandate within its existing areas of operations and within existing resources. The Mission would be unable to respond to all threats to civilians across the country. In such a case, MONUSCO would require additional resources to continue to implement its mandate, including good offices, political engagement and advocacy, human rights monitoring and reporting and, more broadly, enhancement of the protection of civilians.

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Ongoing adjustments

In the scenario described above, the Mission would be required to enhance the safety of its personnel and premises, strengthen its engagement with local, national and regional authorities, dispatch mobile teams for monitoring and early warning, help to de-escalate tensions and, where necessary, deploy uniformed capabilities to address protection threats. This would be largely achieved through the reallocation of its existing resources in line with the adjustments envisaged following the strategic review conducted in 2017, which had been aimed at enhancing the Mission's ability to deal with a potentially volatile and fluid political and security situation in the run-up to, and the immediate aftermath of, the elections.

As recommended in the strategic review and in the framework of reforms currently under way, the timely deployment of two additional rapidly deployable battalions, to be based in Kasai and Tanganyika, along with the necessary enablers, including air assets, will be key to providing the MONUSCO force with the requisite mobility and flexibility to support efforts to contain violence in rural hotspots where the Mission does not have a significant fixed presence. Alongside the Mission's remaining framework battalions, the rapidly deployable battalions are addressing and responding to protection threats in rural areas. The fourth battalion should be operational by September 2018, while measures are being taken by the Secretariat to accelerate the deployment of the fifth by October 2018.

Efforts to render formed police units more flexible and agile and to deploy additional armoured personnel carriers for each unit before the electoral period, as requested in the strategic review, are aimed at preventing and reducing tensions in urban settings. Following considerable efforts by the Secretariat to generate the remaining 13 armoured personnel carriers, 5 are currently ready to be deployed and are expected to be in the Mission area before the elections, while efforts are under way to expedite the deployment of the remaining carriers.

Options for temporary reinforcement

In order to have a meaningful impact on the ability of the Mission to deliver on its mandate during the current challenging electoral period, additional military and/or police reinforcements would need to be deployed by November 2018, at the latest, which would require immediate decisions. Various options were explored.

Inter-mission cooperation arrangements for additional troops or police were not considered to be a viable option at this stage, given the challenges facing the other peacekeeping operations deployed in the region, such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Deploying units from peacekeeping operations located further away from the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be prohibitive in terms of the time needed and its potential cost. Efforts to generate formed police units through inter-mission cooperation in the past were not successful. By the same token, following consultations, there appears to be little appetite at the present time among key partners to consider the establishment of an over-the-horizon force — along the lines of Operation Artemis or a European Union force — not least because the situation today presents a very different set of circumstances from those of either the Ituri crisis of 2003 or the 2006 elections.

Options for deploying additional troops through the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System were explored, but it was determined that smaller, more mobile units generated by troop-contributing countries that already had troops on the ground with MONUSCO would have a greater impact and could be deployed more rapidly. The most realistic option for reinforcing the MONUSCO force while remaining

within the mandated troop ceiling would therefore be the temporary reinforcement of the force reserve infantry battalion in Goma or the framework battalion in Kinshasa, through the generation of one or two additional force reserve infantry companies. Further to consultations with potential contributing countries, those units could be in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by November 2018.

The companies could be integrated into the existing unit with minimal requirements for logistical support and no additional camp or accommodation arrangements. The units could supplement protection of civilians activities and enhance the protection of United Nations personnel and premises in large cities with no MONUSCO force presence, such as Kisangani and Lubumbashi.

It should be clearly understood that even a relatively sizeable reinforcement of the Mission's military component is unlikely to have a significant impact in the face of a potential deterioration of the situation marked by widespread election-related violence in Kinshasa and other major cities such as Goma, Lubumbashi and Kisangani.

Options for deploying additional formed police units through the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System were also explored. Deployment through the System before the elections would be possible only by means of strategic airlifting, provided that funds were available to sustain the high costs of air transportation. Furthermore, the police-contributing countries identified by the System would need to commit to their participation in support of MONUSCO and to an envisaged short-term deployment. A decision by the Security Council authorizing such a reinforcement, including to raise the Mission's authorized police strength, would be required immediately.

Therefore, considering the above-mentioned conditions and other unforeseen factors, it is unlikely that those units would arrive at the identified location in the Democratic Republic of the Congo before the electoral period. The deployment of additional formed police units through the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System was therefore not considered a feasible option.

A more realistic option would be to increase the number of individual police officers while remaining within the authorized police strength of the Mission, by filling the 71 vacant positions for police officers. A total of 42 police officers are available to be deployed in approximately 21 days. The remaining officers could be deployed within some three to seven weeks. The individual police officers would contribute to the Mission's early warning, prevention and mitigation efforts and to the reduction of potential tensions through information collection and engagement with the national police, local communities and local authorities. That would allow MONUSCO to enhance its capacity to address potential crises in major urban centres, such as Kisangani and Lubumbashi. Those additional police officers, who would work in close cooperation with the Congolese National Police, could also contribute to enhanced accountability of the national police force through the monitoring of public order management, detention periods and detainees' rights.

They would also contribute to the Mission's comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians and to better monitoring of human rights violations, along with the substantive components of MONUSCO. The deployment of investigators with forensic capacity among those police officers would also support human rights investigations.

Resources

Resources associated with the above-mentioned options for temporary reinforcement were not included in the MONUSCO budget for the 2018/19 period,

even though the general threat environment had been taken into account. Considering the budget for the 2018/19 period adopted by the General Assembly, the Mission would need to reprioritize its resources to the extent possible, and, even though it would be possible to absorb the cost of all the options for temporary reinforcements from within existing resources, it must clearly be noted that doing so would mean that some key activities would have to be suspended.

Conclusion

The successful completion of ongoing efforts to render the MONUSCO force more flexible, mobile and agile through the generation and timely deployment of the fourth and fifth rapidly deployable battalions will ensure that the Mission advances in the implementation of its comprehensive approach to protection, which is focused on early warning, prevention and addressing the root causes of spreading violence and insecurity.

Ultimately, however, political engagement — including from the Security Council — will remain the most effective means of ensuring that MONUSCO is able to continue to deliver on its mandated strategic priorities, namely, to support the implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016 and the electoral process, as well as the protection of civilians.

The priority of MONUSCO during the electoral period will therefore be to focus on political efforts at the local, national and regional levels, as well as on prevention and mitigation. To that end, good offices efforts are under way, and MONUSCO continues to promote confidence-building measures. The Mission also continues its human rights monitoring and engagement efforts, as well as its engagement with national security forces on the non-lethal use of force in public order management.

As always, I count on Member States to provide MONUSCO with the support and resources required to fulfil its mandated priorities during the present decisive period. However, the responsibility for sustaining a peaceful environment during this sensitive period rests first and foremost with the Congolese authorities and people, in particular the political stakeholders. They themselves must assume this responsibility, exercise restraint and refrain from any actions that could contribute to a deterioration of the current fragile situation. I hope that the upcoming visit of the Security Council to the Democratic Republic of the Congo will help in calling upon all key Congolese political stakeholders to take the steps necessary to ensure the holding of credible, peaceful and timely elections.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

United Nations S/2018/728

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 July 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 20 July 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 19 and 20 July 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) D. **Polyanskiy**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 20 July 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (19 July 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire in Ladhiqiyah Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported one incident of gunfire in Hama Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out two humanitarian operations:

- One in Kahil, Dar'a Governorate (650 food parcels with a total weight of 2.8 tons were distributed to people in need); and
- One in Nu'aymah, Dar'a Governorate (650 food parcels with a total weight of 2.8 tons were distributed to people in need).

In total, 1,870 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,805.06 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to nine residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 85,928 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (20 July 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire: three in Ladhiqiyah Governorate and one in Hama Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any incidents of gunfire.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out one humanitarian operation over the past 24 hours in Salihiyah, Dayr al-Zawr Governorate: 650 food parcels with a total weight of 2.8 tons were distributed to people in need.

In total, 1,871 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,807.86 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 52 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 85,980 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.